

Israel over the August recess, I know that the gentleman is as concerned as I am about the potential nuclear developments in Iran and the fact, I believe, that both of us feel that Iran poses an existential threat not only to the United States but also to our democratic ally, Israel.

There were some reports today regarding some shifting of that notion, the policy behind that notion, from the administration. We had the Vice President today indicate that somehow because Iran did not have the potential capacity to launch a missile to reach our shores, that somehow we could deal with the threat of Iran. We also have news that indicates a shift in our policy of missile defense in terms of our commitment to our allies in Europe as well as Israel.

Again I would say, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman and I have both worked hard on the issue of trying to stop the development of nuclear weapons in Iran specifically aimed at our only democratic ally, Israel, in the region. I have believed all along and I have spoken to the gentleman about it, that we ought to be moving as quickly as possible on the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act. I would like to ask the gentleman, with all that having been said, Would it not be appropriate at this point to bring that bill to the floor to give the President some tools at his disposal while he meets with the leader of Iran in New York next week?

I yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

As the gentleman correctly pointed out, I believe that a nuclear-armed Iran is dangerous and unacceptable, not only to Israel but to the region which I think will be greatly destabilized and which will start a nuclear arms race in the region.

In addition, as the gentleman knows, there are a quarter of a million Americans right now today as we speak within range of Iranian missiles. So I believe a nuclear-armed Iran, personally I believe it is in fact a danger to the region and to the international community and to the interests of the United States of America.

It is the policy of the United States, expressed by our President, that a nuclear-armed Iran was not an acceptable situation to exist. The administration, as you know, is pursuing attempts to negotiate to an end that there is an abandonment which is verified of Iran's nuclear efforts.

With respect to the bills, there are two bills as the gentleman knows. Chairman FRANK has a bill in his committee, an Iran sanctions enabling act, and Chairman BERMAN has a bill in his committee on the Iran refined petroleum sanctions act. I will tell the gentleman that I am meeting with Mr. BERMAN and Mr. FRANK early next week to discuss the bringing of those bills and the order we ought to bring them to have maximum impact, and I expect to do that in the near future.

When I say "near future," I mean within a matter of weeks. It will not be next week, but whether it is the week after or the week after that. But my expectation is, after talking with Mr. FRANK and Mr. BERMAN, we will be bringing those two sanctions bills to the floor in the near future.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman.

My concern lies in the fact of the reports out of the administration today, and perhaps new intelligence information is being relied upon to result in a swift turnaround in our policy vis-a-vis Iran which is why I raised this question and seek from the gentleman his consistent position that has been up until now that we do face a threat in Iran in its current capacity.

As the gentleman states, we have uniformed armed men and women in Insirlik, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, throughout the region that certainly are in the line of Shahab-3 missiles that could do serious harm to American life and interests. I think out of that concern, I ask the gentleman could we see an expedited push on this bill to demonstrate that this Congress, this House, is not yielding to this notion that somehow Iran is no longer a threat?

I yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Now to this concept, I don't want anybody to be confused. I am not sure exactly what the gentleman is saying. I heard him talking about it, the administration position, as far as I know, has not changed with respect to the concept of which the gentleman speaks.

A nuclear-armed Iran, I believe the administration and I believe this Congress, believes is an unacceptable undermining both of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, but also of the stability of a very unstable region of the world. I want to reiterate that I think that remains the position of the administration. It is certainly my position, and I believe it is the position of the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and I think of this Congress.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman. I think I am to take heart in that position because I do know that the administration today had downgraded its alarm, if you will, downgraded the threat that Iran poses.

I yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I am not sure exactly what he is referring to other than the perception of how quickly the Iranians may convert to nuclear capability their present capacity, whether there is a longer time than that. But I have not had direct communication with the administration on that issue. I don't want to speak for the administration, but I think what I have already said to this point does in fact reflect certainly all of the communications I have had with the administration to date.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his time.

□ 1430

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY,
SEPTEMBER 21, 2009

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 4 p.m. on Monday next, and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 22, 2009, for morning-hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

THE CRUSADERS: NATIONAL NETWORK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, LouAnne is an elementary student in Texas. In the mornings, she eagerly awaits to be picked up by the school bus. After school, she rides the bus home, but sometimes she hesitates and slowly gets off that bus.

Once, she just sat on the bus when it pulled in front of her house. The bus driver walked to her seat and told her, "LouAnne, this is where you get off." LouAnne would not leave her seat, and replied, "Daddy hurts me and Momma."

We should realize, Mr. Speaker, that behind the closed doors of many houses in America, violence is a way of life. It's a bad life, a sad way of life. It affects spouses and children. It affects the physical and mental health of American families.

Domestic violence is a public health issue. One group that helps victims of home violence is the National Network to End Domestic Violence. These crusaders are the leading voice for domestic violence victims and advocates. They are helping to expose violence, support survivors, and change the culture of our communities.

I commend them for their wonderful work. Of all the places on Earth where a person should be safe, it's at home.

And that's just the way it is.

WRONGFUL BILL OF ATTAINDER

(Mr. NADLER of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. NADLER of New York. A little while ago, the House passed an amendment to the bill that we were considering that says no contract for Federal funds may ever go to ACORN, a named organization, or to any individual organization affiliated with ACORN.

Unfortunately, this was done on the spur of the moment and nobody had the opportunity to point out that this

is a flat violation of the Constitution, constituting a bill of attainder. The Constitution says Congress shall pass no bill of attainder.

The Supreme Court has ruled a bill of attainder is a legislative act that, no matter what their form, applies either to named individuals or to easily ascertainable members of a group in such a way as to inflict punishment, and then without a judicial trial. That's exactly what this amendment does.

It may be that ACORN is guilty of various infractions, and if so, it ought to be investigated, maybe sanctioned, whatever, by the appropriate administrative agency or maybe by the judiciary. Congress must not be in the business of punishing individual organizations or people without trial.

That's what this amendment did. It is flatly prohibited by the Constitution. And once confidence in this institution is sapped, when we ignore the Constitution, we ignore constitutional principles, that whatever one may think of the subject matter or the organization here, the Constitution and the ban on bills of attainder is there for the protection of the liberties of all of us.

It's unfortunate that we passed this, and I certainly hope it is removed in the conference committee.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

HONORING PRESTON M. "PETE" GEREN, III

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EDWARDS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the dedicated public service of our friend and former colleague, Preston M. "Pete" Geren, III. Tomorrow, September 18, will be the last day of Mr. Geren's service as Secretary of the United States Army, but I am confident it will not be his last day of service to the country he has served so well.

Pete Geren's service to country began 26 years ago as an aid to the distinguished Senator from Texas, Lloyd Bentsen. The depth and breadth of Pete's public service since then has been rarely matched in American history.

For 8 years, this native son of Fort Worth served the 12th District of Texas here in the U.S. House of Representatives. As a member of the Armed Services, Science and Technology, and Public Works and Transportation Committees, Congressman Geren earned the respect of Democrats and Republicans alike as an intelligent, hardworking, and effective Member of Congress. He championed, among many others, the

causes of a strong national defense, fiscal responsibility, and bipartisanship.

Pete Geren earned the respect of his constituents in Texas and his colleagues here in Washington because he always treated others with respect. He personified the Golden Rule each and every day, and in doing so, set a standard of public service that we would all be well served to follow.

I will never forget a December day in the late 1990s, standing right on the back row here, when House votes were unexpectedly added for a Friday afternoon. Pete was torn between going back to Texas, where his family was, and seeing his daughter in her school Christmas play or staying in Washington for the unscheduled vote.

This devoted father agonized over that decision and ultimately decided that he had an obligation to cast a vote on behalf of his constituents. It was not long after that that Pete made the decision to retire from Congress. And I will always believe that his love of family and the missed Christmas play that day strongly impacted his decision to retire.

Four years later, his country called on Pete Geren once again. A lifetime Democrat, Pete was called by the George W. Bush administration to serve in the Pentagon. 2001 began a remarkable chapter of service to our Nation's defense.

From 2001 to 2009, during a time of war and a critical time in our Nation's history, Pete Geren served as Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense in the areas of interagency initiatives, legislative affairs, and special projects. He then was appointed to serve as the Acting Secretary of the Air Force, and later as Acting Secretary of the Army.

In March of 2007, Pete Geren was confirmed as United States Secretary of the Army. In that position, he championed the cause of improving the quality of life for every Army soldier and every Army family. For years to come, because of the dedicated leadership of Secretary Geren, soldiers will live in better housing. They and their families will receive better health care, and they can know that their children will attend quality schools. Pete Geren, as Secretary of the Army, set up covenants between communities and the military installations in which they existed.

Pete Geren's accomplishments are too numerous, Mr. Speaker, to list them all today, but I think one of his greatest legacies will be that he proved that in the rough-and-tumble world of politics in Washington, D.C., one can succeed at the highest levels of public service through hard work, respect for others, solid integrity, and genuine humility.

Pete Geren is living proof that public service can and should be a noble calling. I wish him, his wife, Becky, and their family all the best in the years ahead.

SOUDER AMENDMENT ON STUDENT LOANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. I wanted to briefly explain what happened to the Souder amendment in the student loan bill. We had worked out an agreement last night, and then I was occupied over in a border security hearing that was very important on SBInet and didn't make it over to the floor. I appreciate that Chairman MILLER explained the compromise some, but I wanted to go through a little bit of what the history of this is.

First, in existing law, both a possession conviction and a dealing conviction will result in your loss of a student loan. You can get that loan back by going through treatment, drug testing. You can get it back in the second year.

The second time it happens—this is while you have a loan—if you get convicted, then you would be suspended for 2 years, unless you went through treatment and then were drug-tested as clean. The third time and you're out. Now, for dealing, it was two times.

There's been a lot of ruckus about how this law was initially applied, but we fixed that. I had no intention ever of punishing people who at some time in their life had problems, whether it was in high school or in their later life that they had convictions.

I believe in forgiveness. I believe it's important that people get back on the right track. I believe that we need to work in our prison population to get them to move back to school, to get the degrees possible.

The initial debate on this law on the House floor and in committee said: You will lose your loan. You can't lose a loan if you don't have a loan. We had debate about that for many years. We got that fixed. But I believe, overwhelmingly, every poll shows that the American people believe that if you are convicted, which is not easy when you're on a college campus, while you're getting taxpayer funding, you should lose the funding. It doesn't mean you're going to lose school. It doesn't mean you're going to go out. But why should the taxpayers fund you if you're going to be basically drug-addled while you're at school?

The challenge with this debate is that it has become kind of a cause celebre in the marijuana community. As this progressed, as we did the reauthorization on student loans, the so-called Souder amendment was not completely knocked out, but possession was knocked out. We left the law in place for dealing.

So my amendment today would have reinstated possession as a grounds for losing a student loan.

Congressman PERLMUTTER from Colorado came to me and said he had a suggested compromise. He made his compromise, which basically says that conviction of a felony offense of narcotics